



Portland Harbor

GASCO Removal Action May 2005

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) invites your comments on the removal of a tar mass contaminating Willamette River sediment at the former GASCO site. The tar continues to contaminate the Portland Harbor Superfund site.

Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis Available for Review

Five cleanup alternatives were evaluated in an Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EE/CA), prepared by site owner Northwest Natural with EPA oversight. The five alternatives include capping, dredging, disposal options, and ways in which short-term water quality impacts may be best controlled.

After carefully evaluating the five alternatives, using established criteria (*see below*), EPA recommends Alternative C because it best protects human health and the environment, in addition to the other criteria.

Criteria for Evaluating Alternatives

- *Overall protection of human health and the environment*
- *Compliance with other state and federal laws*
- *Short-term effectiveness*
- *Long-term effectiveness*
- *Reduction of mobility, toxicity and volume of contaminants*
- *Ability to carry out the alternative*
- *State acceptance*
- *Community acceptance (evaluation will follow this public comment opportunity)*
- *Cost*

The Five Alternatives for Removing the Tar Mass are:

Alternative A proposes capping the tar mass in the river without any removal.

How Can I Comment?

Comments must be postmarked by **June 13, 2005**. Written comments should be sent to: **Sean Sheldrake**, EPA Project Manager, 1200 Sixth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101-1128

You can provide spoken comments at a public meeting on: **Thursday, May 26 at 6:00 p.m., St. Johns Community Center 8427 N. Central in Portland.**

Review the EE/CA on EPA website: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/ph/gasco>; at the St. Johns, Northwest Branch, and Main Libraries; or by request from **Judy Smith** at 503-326-6994.

Alternative B proposes removing the contamination by dredging and then placing a cap over the area. Contamination would be contained during removal using a non-rigid containment system such as a silt curtain and floatable oil boom. Contamination would be disposed of in the Columbia Ridge Subtitle D [*non-hazardous waste*] facility.

(continued on page 2)

Five EE/CA Alternatives *continued*

Alternative C proposes removing the contamination by dredging and then placing a cap over the area. Contamination would be contained during removal using a non-rigid containment system, but contamination would be disposed of in the ChemWaste Subtitle C [*hazardous waste*] facility.

Alternative D proposes removing the contamination by dredging and then placing a cap over the area. Contamination would be contained during removal using a rigid containment system such as a sheet-

pile barrier wall. Contamination would be disposed of in the Columbia Ridge Subtitle D [*non-hazardous waste*] facility.

Alternative E proposes removing the contamination by dredging and then placing a cap over the area. Contamination would be contained during removal using a rigid containment system, but contamination would be disposed of in the ChemWaste Subtitle C [*hazardous waste*] facility.

Alternative	Removal	Post-removal	Construction Containment	Disposal
A	None	Capping	None	None
B	Dredging	Capping	Non-rigid	Subtitle D
C	Dredging	Capping	Non-rigid	Subtitle C
D	Dredging	Capping	Rigid	Subtitle D
E	Dredging	Capping	Rigid	Subtitle C

What is the tar mass and why is it a problem?

The tar mass at the former GASCO site was created by discharges from the oil gasification facility early in the 20th century. The discharges ended in the 1940s, but the contamination remains in and on top of river sediment. The tar contains high levels of total polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (TPAH), as well as other chemicals, most notably benzene. The tar mass could also be eroded and redeposited. About 15,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment must be removed.

Some tar contamination at the former GASCO site is visible along the shore.



How Does the GASCO Removal affect the harbor-wide cleanup of Portland Harbor?

EPA finds the GASCO site to be one of several highly contaminated sites on the Willamette River that need cleanup action without delay. The removal of tar at GASCO is an early action designed to work well with planning for the final cleanup at the Portland Harbor Superfund site. EPA makes sure that the alternative chosen will agree with long-term planning and site cleanup.

An early action does not prevent further cleanup at GASCO if it is needed. Early cleanup of hotspots also makes it less likely that other cleanup areas

will be recontaminated. Removal of this tar mass in the river and replacement with clean cap material may also help to more quickly understand the degree to which widespread upland tar and oil contamination are moving into the river.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is in the process of evaluating cleanup needs on the upland part of the GASCO site. For more information on this related effort, contact **Matt McClincy**, DEQ Project Manager (*see below*).

For More Information, contact:

Judy Smith, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator
503-326-6994 smith.judy@epa.gov

Sean Sheldrake, EPA Project Manager (Early Actions)
800-424-4372 sheldrake.sean@epa.gov

Matt McClincy, DEQ Project Manager
503-229-5538 McCincy.Matt@deq.state.or.us

Information repositories are located at the following Multnomah County libraries:

St. Johns Branch Library
Reference Desk
7510 N. Charleston Avenue

Northwest Branch Library
Reference Desk
2300 NW Thurman Street

Central Library Government Documents
Reference Desk
801 SW 10th Avenue

On the Web at:

GASCO website: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/cleanup.nsf/ph/GASCO>



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 10 (ETPA-081)
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle WA 98101-1128

Pre-Sorted Standard
Postage and Fees Paid
U.S. EPA
Permit No. G-35
Seattle, WA

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

YOUR COMMENTS ARE INVITED
GASCO REMOVAL ACTION
PORTLAND, OREGON
MAY 2005



<> *Working with you for a better environment.* <>



Alternative formats are available. To request reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities, please call Judy Smith. TTY users, please call 1-800-977-8339.